



Teaching Support video script: An inclusive learning environment

In this session we will cover:

- The characteristics of an inclusive learning environment
- How an inclusive learning environment develops the Cambridge learner attributes
- Strategies for creating an inclusive early years learning environment.

An inclusive learning environment is a positive environment, where learning experiences are meaningful, relevant and accessible to all children. In an inclusive learning environment, all children feel safe and confident to share ideas. They feel able to test their abilities by taking risks and to ask for help when they find something difficult. We will cover how to provide well managed opportunities for risk taking and how to provide a safe learning environment, so children feel safe, and are safe. An inclusive learning environment values individual difference and diversity.

Children bring diversity to your setting in a range of different ways, including:

- Their social and cultural background
- The languages they speak
- Their gender
- Their experiences
- Their individual competencies
- Any special learning needs they have
- Their interests and preferences.

Diversity should be celebrated. It is part of your role to understand each child as an individual, so you can create a learning environment that provides equity of access to learning and nurtures the potential of each child. Through your planning, teaching strategies and monitoring, you can be proactive in considering the diverse needs of all children, enabling them to move on together without the need for individual adjustments. Differentiation is an inclusive approach that enables all children to move on together.

How an inclusive learning environment develops the Cambridge learner attributes

An inclusive environment supports children in developing the Cambridge learner attributes:

Responsible. Children begin to take some responsibility for their own care, for example, getting dressed and hand washing. They begin to take some responsibility for controlling their own thinking, learning and emotions. This is self-regulation. They interact positively with others and have positive attitudes to people's similarities and differences.

Innovative. Children ask questions to find out more about the world around them. They try different strategies to overcome challenges and solve problems.

Confident. Children apply speaking and listening skills to express, clarify and develop their own ideas and to respond constructively to other's ideas. They identify when they need help in order to progress their learning.

Engaged. Children are curious about the world around them and keen to observe and explore to find out more. They develop their own and others' knowledge, understanding and skills through social interaction and collaboration.

Reflective. Children reflect on their own and others' activities saying what they liked and did not like, and what went well and not so well. They begin to understand how reflection and feedback can help to develop new ideas.

Strategies for creating an inclusive early years learning environment

Here are four suggested strategies for creating an inclusive early years learning environment. This list is not exhaustive. You can pause this video at any time to write down ideas and reflect on your own practice.

Reflecting on your own practice

- You provide routines and clear behavioural expectations that help to make children feel comfortable and secure. For example:
 - Do you welcome each child into the setting and acknowledge their departure?
 - Do you eat, undertake group activities and tidy up at the same time each day so children become familiar with the routine?
 - Do you prepare children for changes in the routine, such as 'in 5 minutes we will tidy up'?
- You have equally high expectations of every child. For example:
 - Are you aware of each child's stage of development and ability?
 - Do you provide sufficient challenge for each child?
 - Do you allow children time to think before answering your questions?
- Your resources and activities promote diversity. For example:
 - Do you sing songs in children's home languages?
 - Do the books in your setting include books in children's home languages?
 - Do they include stories from different cultures?
 - Do they include characters with impairments or disabilities?
- You model a positive attitude to cultural diversity. For example:
 - Do you ask children about their cultural experiences, and share your own?
 - Do you try to use children's home languages, even if they are not your own language? For example, when you greet them in the morning.
- Your resources and activities avoid gender stereotypes. For example:
 - Do the books in your setting portray female and male characters equally?
 - Are both women and men shown in a variety of roles and not just roles that are traditionally considered female or male?

- You avoid gender stereotypes through your own behaviour. For example:
 - Do you notice when children appear to be following gender stereotypes and encourage them to join in with all activities?
 - Do you encourage mixed gender groups?
 - Do you avoid using stereotypical language, such as ‘Play nicely with the girls’?

Ensuring that every child feels comfortable in the whole-class community

- You make sure that all children have a secure understanding before moving on to a new concept so that nobody feels ‘left behind’ or ‘less able’.
- You provide a wide variety of activity types and resources so there is always something that a child enjoys and feels comfortable with.
- You use child-centred activities so that each child feels that their preferences and ideas are valued.
- You use real-life contexts that are meaningful to all children so that they can make links between school and everyday experiences, regardless of their home background.

Responding to individual differences

- You understand each child’s social and cultural background. This is covered in more detail in ‘Making links between your setting, home and the wider community’.
- You provide appropriate support for children whose home language is not the same as the school language. This is covered in more detail in ‘A multilingual approach’.
- You get to know each child’s interests and preferences so you can provide activities and contexts that are motivating for them.
- You understand each child’s special learning needs and provide appropriate support and resources so that each child has the opportunity to join in with activities.
- You respond to each child’s competencies. This is covered in more detail in ‘Differentiation’.
- You make sure children have time to explore and consider ideas at their own pace.
- You provide feedback on children’s achievements to encourage them to challenge themselves and take risks.

Valuing children as individuals

Children that feel valued and supported feel a sense of belonging. This gives them the confidence to develop and succeed in your setting and beyond.

- You give children opportunities to make their own decisions. For example, which activity they want to take part in, what they want to play with or whether to work inside or outside.
- You encourage children to ask questions and to explain their actions and ideas.
- You show appreciation of everyone’s ideas and contributions, to encourage children to develop their own ideas and to express themselves creatively.
- You involve children in their own learning. For example, by asking them to reflect on what they liked about an activity and what went well.

An inclusive learning environment

An inclusive learning environment provides every child with the opportunity to develop at their own pace and fulfil their potential. This is beneficial to learning and life outside your early years setting.

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